

Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

FOUNDED 1980 AS AMES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter to Members 2008 SUMMER.. ISSUE #2/4

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



Skateland opened in 1949

Ames Historical Society Board:

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Mary Atherly, Bob Bourne, Roger Coulson, Matthew Donovan, Nick Howell, Carol Phillips, Neal Tarman, Dennis Wendell, Sharon Wirth

The Board meets the 2nd Monday of each month at City Hall at 6:30pm. Members welcome!

Administrator Alan Spohnheimer
Staff Sara Vouthilak, Dennis Wendell

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

Headqtrs: 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm
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Website: www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments & questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

Beautiful Lighting, Music by Seeburg: Remembering Skateland!

From information provided by Floyd Penkhus, Ames

The first permanent structure in Ames designed specifically to be used for roller skating was built in 1949. The state-of-the-art project was undertaken by Jack Hoepfner and Floyd and Robert Penkhus, all of Ames. The trio ran a skating rink in Colorado Springs, CO and also owned the Ames Lincoln-Mercury car dealership at 111 Main Street. An article in the Ames Tribune commended the men for recognizing the great need for recreational facilities for young people and "doing something about it".

The general contractor for the project was Ben Cole and Son, an Ames family well known for fine construction. They built the first McFarland Clinic on Fifth Street, and the Grand Avenue underpass, among many other local projects.

Skateland was located at 527 South Duff, measured 90 feet by 150 feet and was constructed with 12-inch concrete block walls and an arched trussed roof. The wood skating floor ran the full length of the structure and was 65 feet wide by 150 feet long. The rink included a refreshment stand and plenty of parking. The cost in 1949 was \$75,000, with \$20,000 of that amount earmarked for "lighting and extras."



Skateland opened in May of 1949. A full-page "Grand Opening" ad appeared in the September 6, 1949 issue of the Ames Daily Tribune that listed the facility's many features.

Music by Seeburg: ...Specially made organ melodies by the world's greatest artists, reproduced by the magnificent Seeburg Select-o-Matic System. The new Skateland is one of only five skating rinks in America to use this equipment.

Beautiful Lighting: ... A full quarter-mile of neon tubing in five outstanding colors; red, blue, green, white, and gold ... in brilliant combinations with each change of skating numbers. So elaborate that 25 transformers and a mile and a half of wiring were required to bring them to the switchboards.

Skating Floor: ... No. 1 hard Michigan Maple throughout and over an inch thick. So perfectly laid that it required six carpenters 17 days to install it ... every nail hole drilled, every nail countersunk ... then sanded many times to give a velvety, not slick, smoothness.

Outstanding Ventilation: ... The air is always fresh at Skateland; two huge fans capable of changing all the air in the building keep it entirely fresh and clear of dust. And a huge automatic oil furnace to keep it at perfect temperature in winter.

For the finest of everything, it's Ames' new Skateland.

The Grand Opening on Friday and Saturday, September 8 and 9, 1949 featured a performance by professional and champion skaters "in a colorful program."

Skateland offered evening skating four days a week, afternoon skating on Saturday and Sunday, afternoon practice sessions and professional instruction. Later, the rink added air conditioning and became the only Midwest skating facility to offer such a comfortable amenity.



Two well-known employees were Jim Kathman (above, right), the manager until he retired in 1964, and Winona Milenbusch, the organist who came from Boone to play on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings.

The year 1949 was a busy one for the Hoeppner-Penkhus team. In October, they opened Twentieth Century Bowling next door to Skateland. The original bowling alley building was constructed with a curved roof and 12-inch concrete block walls, similar to that of the Skateland structure. Eventually, Hoeppner and the Penkhuses added an outdoor miniature golf course and the Century Theaters near the bowling alley — making a complete and varied recreation complex with something for everyone.

Skateland closed in 1968 following a tornado that tore off the roof and caused the maple flooring to be ruined. Despite this abrupt and sad ending, Skateland has continued in the memory of the many Ames teens who grew up whizzing around the smooth floor under changing lights to the sound of beautiful music.



Ames Tribune Photo

1957: The lights in the sign were changed by pushing buttons located in the office.



GRAND OPENING
Of The Beautiful New
SKATELAND
from 8 until 11 o'clock Friday and Saturday, Sept. 8-10
And Presenting Through Courtesy of Anadale Kette, Chicago, Illinois:
Teddy Rosdahl
AMERICAN CHAMPION!
Edward Krichman - Len Krichman, John Krichman and Unity Dolly Roberts
Internationally Famous Skaters, In a Colorful Program

Here Are a Few Interesting Highlights:
Beautiful Lighting:
Music by Simeburg:
Skating Floor:
Outstanding Ventilators:
Clean Rest Rooms:
No Parking Worries:
Really Firsthand Throughput:
Up the Hinges of Skating It's Ames! (Pine Skateland)

Entire Program Arranged and Presented by:
Fred Wickman
Professional Skating Instructor
A Modern Figure Skating Club, Anadale Kette, Chicago, Illinois
The Famous Ames and Dan McIntire Skating Club, Anadale Kette, Chicago, Illinois
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Skateland Program Effective Sept. 9
Formal Opening:
Skating Nightly:
Afternoon Skating:
Practice Sessions:
Ames Peak Skateland, Colorado Springs, Colo.
A Member of
Roller Skating Rink of America.

The new **SKATELAND** In Ames

ANNOUNCING
Skateland's Fall Opening
Friday, August 1
Completely Redecorated
Refinished Skating Surface
Air Conditioned Comfort to Make a Polar Bear Grown with Delight!
Another First For Ames
Only Known Midwest Rink With Air Conditioning
Skating Nightly Wed., Fri., Sat., and Sun. 7:30 to 10:30
Afternoons Sat. and Sun., 2:00 to 4:30
527 So. Duff CE 2-9840

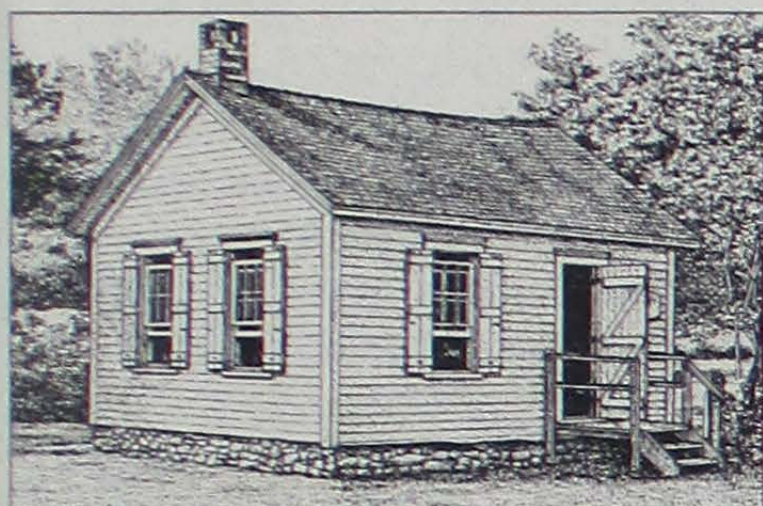


Ames Historical Society News

Hoggatt School Open Weekends Through August 31

Summer fun has started at Hoggatt School, which opened May 31 and will be open from 2-4:30pm, Saturdays and Sundays through August 31.

On Saturday, June 14, Summer Game Fest featured traditional children's games from the 1860's. Curator Carol Alexander Phillips has enjoyed researching play activities from the Civil War era to share with school visitors. A second Games Day will be held July 12.



Carol hosted several groups of children prior to the end of the school year and was pleased to provide a genuine

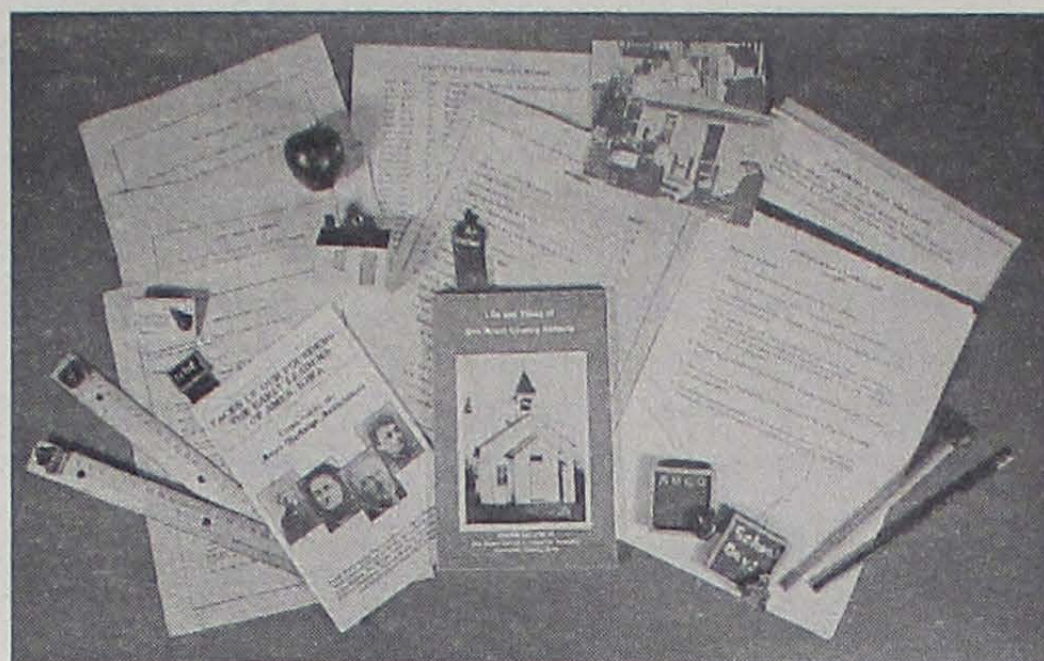
experience for each visitor with our newly acquired slates. Our sincere thanks go to Mark Chidister for cutting and donating the slate from old chalkboards, to Dollie Struss for framing the individual slates, and to Don Zytowski for a \$50 donation toward materials for the project.

New weekend volunteers are still welcome. Training is available and there is a handbook outlining policies, study cards with significant information, and a variety of Civil War era artifacts to aid in hosting visitors to the school. To volunteer and arrange for training, please contact Carol Alexander Phillips, 515-232-0595.

Country School Conference October 10-11, 2008

The Ames Historical Society will be hosting the two-day statewide country school conference Friday and Saturday, October 10-11, 2008 at the DMACC Hunziker Center, 1420 South Bell Ave. in Ames. Local, state, and national speakers will present information and inspiration, and tours will be taken to visit area historical country schools.

Registration is now open. Stop at Society headquarters, 416 Douglas #101 for a form, or contact Bill Sherman, 1-800-434-2039, wsherman@networkiowa.com or Carole Jensen, 515-233-2431, hmjensen@aol.com. Friday's activities cost \$30, and Saturday's tours plus lunch are \$30.



Society's Gift Shop Features Unique Mementoes

Items in the Society's gift shop complement our mission and collections, and offer hard-to-find and unusual items. Publications provide many local history stories, including Farwell Brown's books, the Ames centennial history and *Transportation in Iowa: a historical summary*.

Stop in soon to see these new arrivals:

- 4 x 6" Iowa flags with stands, Iowa state seal decals, state of Iowa flag patches
- Goose quill pen sets; sewing cards
- Cat's cradle kit; Hand propellers
- Slates and slate pencils
- Civil War poker card decks
- WWII Aircraft Spotter Cards playing card decks
- Metal duck clicker toys
- American History playing card decks
- Native American playing card decks
- *Children's Rules and Manners*
- *The Button Book*
- *Ames, A Ride Through Town on the Dinkey*

The Hoggatt School illustration by Ken Dunker, left, is featured on an attractive note card – one among several cards and postcards available. The Gift Shop is open Wednesday-Friday, 1-5pm or by appointment.



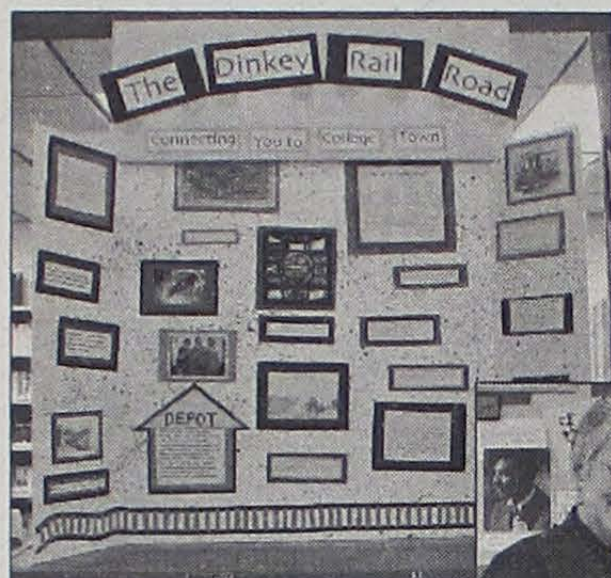
The Society was part of a College for Seniors course this spring organized by member, Marti Rasmussen. Ames stories were presented and other Story County museums were previewed. Janet

Klaas, Ames, is pictured above during her talk on the Farwell Brown Photo Collection at the Ames Public Library.

Ames Historical Society News

Society Supports Extended Learning Projects

Society staff had a fun visit to Meeker School in May to see the finished work of several ELP teams (Extended Learning Program) that created History Day projects. Two teams visited the Society to learn about The Dinkey and Carr's Pool. Alan Spohnheimer related Dinkey information and Kathy Svec, below, told the Carr family story. The displays were shown at the State Historical Museum. The children's advisor called the visit to Society headquarters



the "highlight of their project," and said she wished she had sent all the history day students to visit us because the students had such a great time.



Ames Pictures Find Their Way Home from Pennsylvania



In April, a box arrived from the Monroe County, PA, Historical Society. It contained material from the Dreher and Shugart families (likely from Nevada), and consisted mostly of letters and two photo albums. The albums contained Iowa State College photos and a few Carr's Pool pictures as well

as street scenes from Nevada, 1910 to 1929. The box was sent to A.H.S. because of the Ames photos. We are always delighted to get calls such as the one that preceded the mailing of the box! The Ames photos were retained and the rest were passed along to the Nevada Historical Society.

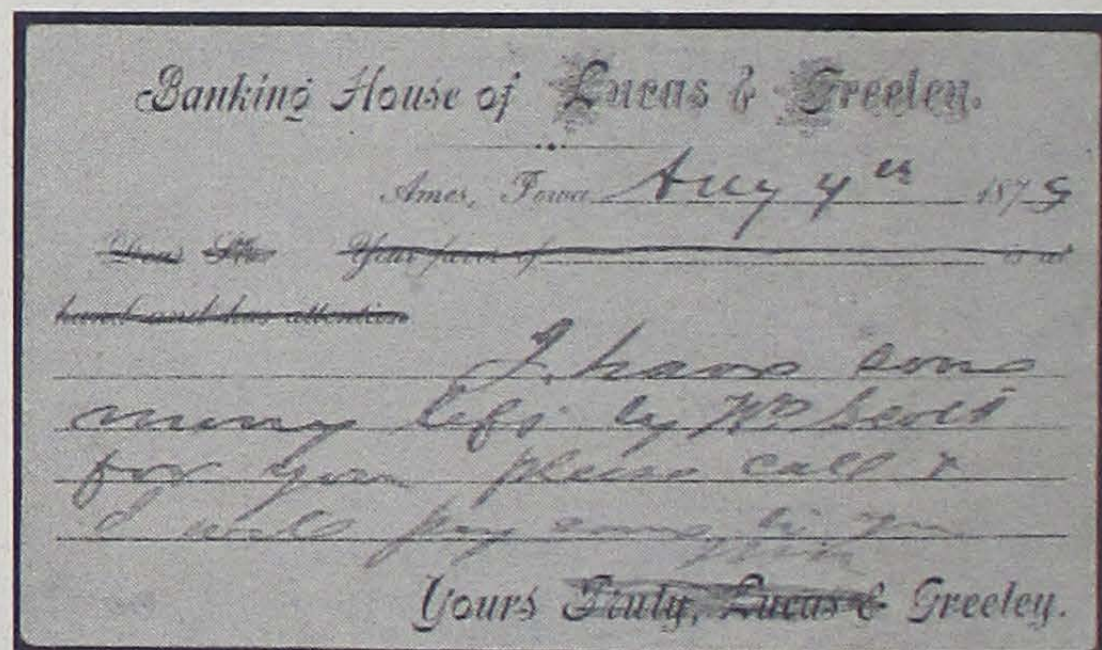


SHSI Board of Trustees Visit Ames on March 26

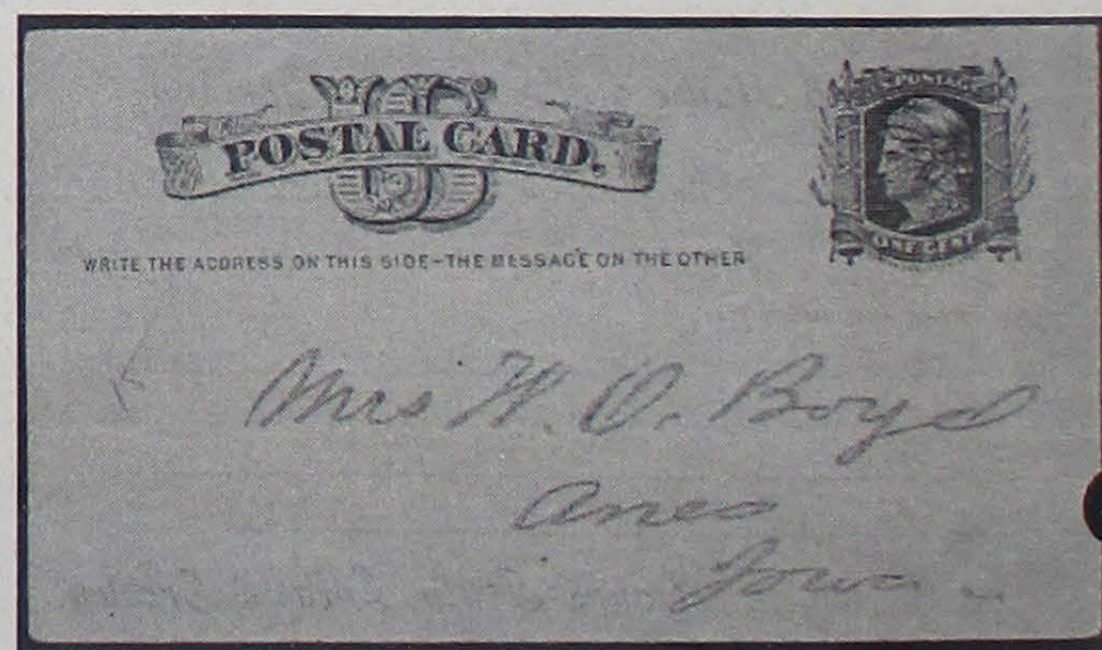
The State Historical Society Board of Trustees held one of their bi-monthly meetings in Ames on March 26. A Trustee who is an Iowa State employee made arrangements for the group to tour noteworthy Ames history sites. Their tour ended at City Auditorium where they heard our March lecture, the "Heart Of Iowa Leg of the 1908 New York To Paris Great Auto Race". We were delighted to host this distinguished group!

Wallace Greeley Treasure

Society Administrator, Alan Spohnheimer, is an avid searcher for Ames treasures on the online auction, E-bay. He has found wonderful items and donated many of them to the Society's collection. Recently, he lost out on an item to a higher bidder, but the seller provided a consolation offering. After showing it around, most folks agreed that he perhaps got the better thing! It was an 1879 postcard sent by Wallace Greeley, founder of the Union National Bank and the philanthropist who donated Mary Greeley Hospital to the city. The card shows evidence of Greeley's first banking enterprise with W.D. Lucas, the 1874-75 Ames mayor.



postcard back



postcard front

Ames Historical Society News



Games Day at Hoggatt is July 12

Mark your calendars for an afternoon of great fun! Join us on **Saturday, July 12** from 2 - 4:30pm for Summer Game Fest at Hoggatt School. Visitors will participate in popular schoolyard games from the 1860's, such as sack races, Red Rover, Ante Ante Over and many more. Bring your kids and grandkids for an old-fashioned good time. Be sure to carry water bottles as the day may be warm.

You Can Help? Please Say Yes!

The Society's staff has been delighted to find a number of volunteers willing to undertake specific projects at our headquarters at 416 Douglas. Substantive contributions are occurring on many fronts such as organizing collections, updating databases, doing small repairs and distributing flyers.

We are seeking a **Membership Assistant** to work a regular schedule of sending out membership renewal notices and writing thank-yous. The schedule can be of one's own choosing, and the work can be done at home. Our membership renewals occur throughout the year, depending on when a person joined.

Memberships are a key part of our annual budget, and assistance with this process would be an important way to help The Society meet its goals. Please call administrator Alan Spohnheimer at 515-232-2148 if you would be interested in getting involved.

You Send Mail

Dorothy Dake of the ISU Women's Club book group sent this note after Kathy Svec's program, *Notable Women in Ames History*, "Your presentation to our Book Club was so inspiring that we're writing some lyrics to Mozart piece which includes your information! I've heard many complimentary comments since Monday's meeting. Thanks so much for your time and for your beautiful presentation to our group!"

Tribute to Gary Moore

By Dennis Wendell, Collections Curator

It is with great sadness that the Ames Historical Society notes the passing Gary W. Moore, one of our favorite donors and friends. Staff looked forward to his visits when he would share Ames stories and artifacts. One never knew what memories, photos or objects he would present next: a 20-quart Moore's Dairy ice cream can, or a 1950s Geiger counter and pocket radiation monitor. He loved to surprise us with items he discovered we needed: a ratchet wrench socket set, electric drill or Twix candy bars.



Staff enjoyed his hearty laugh, unique perceptions and sense of humor. His philosophy of living and his fortitude were exceptional.

My first encounter with Gary was on February 16, 2007. I was doing a story on Moore's Dairy and had been told that Gary was a relative of the family. I

soon discovered he was the nephew of F.T. Moore, the long-time owner and operator. The first meeting with Gary turned out to be a two and a half-hour interview. He enthusiastically shared recollections and photos of the dairy. With additional material gathered in successive interviews, I was able to flesh out a credible history.

As "unofficial" photographer for the city of Ames, Gary took thousands of valuable photos documenting civic activities and building projects. He loaned the Society armloads of bulky photo albums so we could scan highlights. Gary was a whiz at computers and graphics. Working in his upstairs loft, he took great delight in creating engaging stories printed in distinctive fonts and illustrated with carefully chosen images dealing with Ames history.

In spite of his illness, Gary was upbeat and generous with his time. On one occasion, we recruited him to be interviewed by two home-schooled girls interested in the history of Moore Park, thus helping the next generation connect with local history. Gary's legacy to the Society encompasses dozens of illustrated stories, interesting artifacts, unique photos (such as the tunnel connecting Central Junior High with Ames Senior High School) and memories captured by hand-written notes during our visits. He will be greatly missed.

Curator's Report by Dennis Wendell

Donations to the Collections

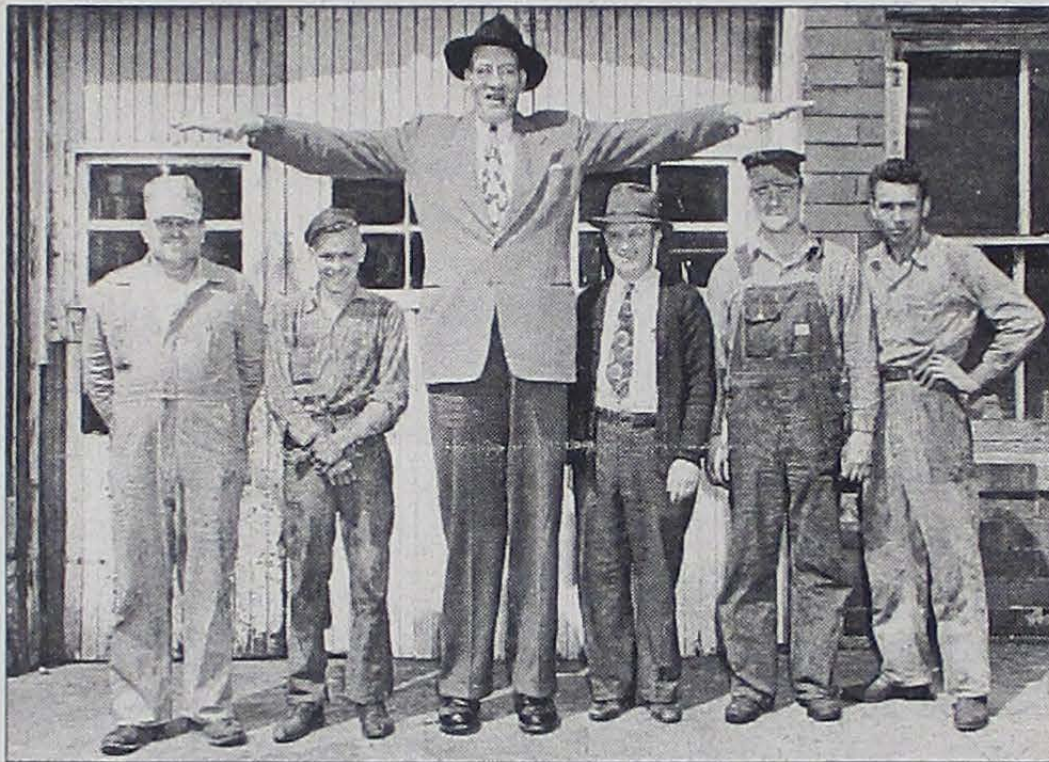
Selected highlights this quarter include:

GIANT'S RING



One of our more unusual artifacts was donated in April by Bob Fitz – a souvenir ring measuring 1 1/4" in diameter. It takes a good-sized finger to wear a ring larger than a

quarter, and famous American giant, Clifford Thompson, filled the bill. Bob obtained two rings during Thompson's visits to Ames in the 1950s. "The Norwegian Viking Giant" was 8' 7" tall and weighed 480 pounds. To fit into his car, he used the back seat on



the driver's side. In 1944, he obtained a law degree and left the sideshow world for good. Photos of Thompson posed with employees of Earl Holdredge Garage may be viewed in "Quick Facts" on our website.

SIGNS

Several outdoor signs from Ames businesses came our way recently. They include two large neon and acrylic ones from Wierson TV & Appliance - one with the familiar RCA logo (Nipper the dog and phonograph), and one with Admiral TV. They were donated by Gert Wierson, who also provided us with history about her father, Gunder Fjare, a home builder from Norway known for his quality workmanship. From Dave Packer came two painted metal signs: "H.L. Munn Co." and "Froning & Deppe Feed Warehouse." A long-sought sign was donated by prolific donor, Jim Menzel. Travelers along Iowa roadways in decades past will recall the "Think, X Marks the Spot" signs indicating fatal vehicle accidents. Jim's example is in mint condition. Once the Society obtains adequate space in a

BUILDING PLANS

Jerry Jones donated plans for key structures in Ames, including Ames High School (1938), Collegiate Methodist Church (1955), Bourns, James Thompson & Sons office, McFarland Medical Building (1954), Perkins, some 1940s hemp manufacturing plants (not constructed), and homes for Clint Adams and Frank Spedding.

Bill Dreyer provided plans for College Savings Bank alterations (1961), Ames Trust and Savings Bank (1941), and Overland Café (1947).

These enrich our collection of over 3,500 plans obtained from City Inspections Department.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Historically significant architecture in Ames*; *Train depots in Iowa* (Wesley Shank)
- Ames High School *Spirit* issues for 1929, 1931-1932, 1934-1935, 1940, 1960-1963 (Kent Cooper)
- Two articles on convict labor used to construct Stange Road in 1915 (Hank Zaletel)
- *Old mills of the mid-west: Illinois and Iowa* (Alan Spohnheimer)
- *Theory of Spencerian penmanship 1874; The Hiawatha primer 1898* (Eileen Mericle)
- *Ladies Home Journal* bound issues for 1924 (Ames Public Library)

PHOTOGRAPHS

- First train load of All-Crop Harvesters to arrive in Iowa, May 13, 1936 (Steve Day)
- Oakwood School class of 1939 (Lynn Matson)
- Frame containing three mounted views of Judisch Bros. Drug Store (Jim Menzel)
- St. Patrick's Day parade marching east on C&NW tracks west of Grand Avenue (Alan Spohnheimer).
- Ames Tourist Court dated 1938 and Lincoln Lodge Motel dated 1963 (Paul Clark)
- John Cole home (JoAnn Peterson)
- Ersland family and home at 324 East 6th Street.

VARIOUS AND SUNDRY

- Gilbert Erector Set No. 6 1/2 (Don McNeil)
- Four Ames police uniforms from the 1970s (Mike Brennan)
- Dentistry memorabilia of H.G. Buck (Ben Buck)
- Ruby-top wine glass "Souvenir of Ames" (Margaret Nichols)
- Clam-broth glass skillet "Souvenir of Ames" (Jim Menzel)

Curator's Report by Dennis Wendell

Desiderata

Below are listed some priority items that we would like to have for our collections.

PHOTOGRAPHS

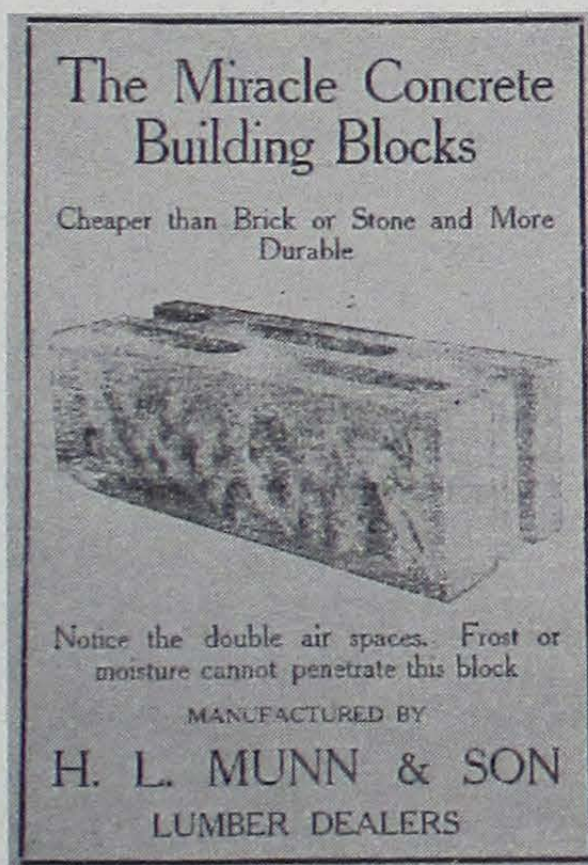
- Brookside Park Zoo
- Sixth Street bridge over railroad just east of Brookside Park (you could become airborne on this bridge if you drove over the angular humps at high speed!)
- Interior of Tilden's store showing "rapid wire cash carrier" system from main floor sales area to cashier in balcony
- Kids drinking from water fountains on Main Street
- Early businesses in Fourth Ward
- Fraternity houses in First Ward

PUBLISHED MATERIAL

- *Tilden Topics*
- *Ames High School Spirits*
- Advertisements from businesses no longer in existence
- Humorous souvenir postcards of Ames
- Old school textbooks and children's books ca. 1800s-late 1940s, particularly Dick and Jane readers

ARTIFACTS

- Examples of concrete blocks made by Passmore or Munn Lumber Company
(an ad for these blocks is shown)
- Storefront signs from former Ames businesses as well as souvenirs given out by them



RECOLLECTIONS

- Written in your own words about memorable events or growing up in Ames. We have shared a number of such local stories on our website. Click on "Your Stories" and enjoy these wonderful tales!

Questers Support Restoration

Among the many significant works of art The Society obtained from the Bert and Mary Adams bequest was a 1926 Ding Darling cartoon. The cartoon needed to be conserved and the work was done by Dianna Clise of the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) in Minneapolis late last year. The drawing was then framed by Gallery 319 in time for display at the April 5th annual state Questers meeting at Scheman Building. The restoration and archival framing were beautifully done! A state Questers grant and donations from all eight Ames chapters paid for the restoration and most of the framing, just over \$2,000. The work was again exhibited on June 5th at the annual tea for all Ames chapters and can be seen at Society headquarters.

County Historical Societies Meet

On April 26, a meeting of county historical societies was held, hosted by the Nevada group. This was prompted by the feeling that we need to get together more frequently than at the annual Story County Board of Supervisors meeting.

An agenda of topics of common concern was set up and the morning spent in discussions and sharing of ideas. In the afternoon the group toured the complex of buildings at Evergreen Lane where a number of historic structures have been consolidated in one place (1870s mansion and carriage house, pioneer log home, one-room school). All 21 participants felt the meeting was worthwhile. Represented were Ames, Cambridge, Gilbert, Maxwell, Nevada, Roland and Slater.

Historical items that have been donated to the Ames Historical Society that belong in other towns were delivered to their rightful communities, notably Realtors Multiple Listing Service real estate sheets. Recipients immediately recognized the value of these. In fact, Margot Eness discovered the sheet for Christian Petersen's home in Gilbert, a house that no longer exists. We were pleased to see one of our hosts, Chris Corbin and family, show up at our final winter lecture series a few days after the joint meeting.

ISU Retirees Spring Fling

Prairie Ark, the Bert and Mary Adams house was the subject of a program and tour for the ISU Retirees' spring meeting. Sara Vouthilak hosted the tour of Prairie Ark and the Curator presented a program that reviewed collections, told about the Adams' lives and showed their artwork, archives and artifacts.

Society Building Fund Update

March 2008 \$233,700 June 2008 \$249,965

Society Operations Endowment

March 2008 \$18,600 June 2008 \$18,412

In March, the first disbursement supporting daily operations was received from the Endowment - \$582. This is an exciting development and a positive sign of things to come!

Our very sincere thanks to all who have contributed!



Ring the Bell!

Volunteers and other Society workers will notice the new doorbell on the employees' entrance at 416

Douglas. To increase security of collections and the personal safety of workers, the

east door from the parking lot will be locked. Those who need entry may ring the bell to notify staff.

Renew Now for 2008

Membership renewals for 2008 are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. See the label on this newsletter for information about your membership.

Introductory - 1st year	\$10	Sustaining	\$100
Individual	\$25	Benefactor	\$500
Family	\$40	Patron	\$1,000
Friend	\$50		

Additional amount for:

Building Fund \$ _____ Operations Endowment \$ _____

Name _____

Checks payable to Ames Historical Society; send to:
Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

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